



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Dr. Goldstein:

I read and signed your petition today to retain funding for the UH Medical School. As we discussed I strongly support your efforts. You are to be honored for taking on this fight.

I think a very strong argument to maintain *and properly fund* the medical school is to pose a simple question: who would be the likely patient of a UH Medical School graduate? The answer is quick and easy—ourselves, our parents, and our children.

It's even more ridiculous the Dr. Mortimer would consider turning the medical school into some type of profit center tied to a two tiered tuition program for in state and out of state residents. What's next, a silent auction for admittance?

Additionally, just how will doctors in our state stay abreast of the most current changes in their field without a medical school within 2500 miles of them?

I'm a big sports fan and a businessman, but I'd rather ditch the athletic programs and the school of business before under funding the medical school.

In the interim, I'll keep saving so that my kids can attend college on the mainland.

Very truly yours,

Name Withheld by Request

*An open letter to Dr. Russell Stodd, editor of the Weathervane Column.*

Sir,

In the August 1999 issue of the Hawaii Medical Journal, you stated your opinion on gun control clearly and concisely on your Weathervane page. Lest anyone read your opinions and believe that even a small minority of physicians agree with you, I am compelled to respond.

Dr. Stodd, you seem to believe that the solution to the rash of recent shootings in America would be to eliminate parental apathy, eliminate one-parent families, improve school attendance and send our children to private schools where they have no shootings because teachers can communicate with parents." Sound idea, but...

I have a slightly easier and more practical solution.

1. All guns are to be registered.
2. All gun owners must be licensed to use the gun by passing a written test and a practical examination (e.g., prove they know where the safety is and how it works).
3. Children under 18 years of age can obtain a permit to use a gun, with a licensed adult present, after passing a written examination on gun safety.
4. Gun owners can and should be held liable if they were negligent in securing a safe location for their gun and if the gun was used in a crime or a firearm accident.

Yes, I know—"Second amendment, the right to bear arms!!!" Of

course you can have arms, just make sure they are registered and that you are certified to use them. And by the way, the Fathers of our Constitution wrote a good framework for the laws of our country, but there were many imperfections (remember the rights of white men to own black men?). Times change and so must we/you.

Speaking of times changing, Dr. Stodd, you must get over using '60's cliches when describing Rosie O'Donnell's gun control stands. She is neither "I.Q. challenged" nor a "bleeding heart" (are the NRA folks then "stone hearts"). Rather, she is a concerned citizen expressing the opinion of the vast majority of Americans, including almost all-responsible medical societies.

The tragedy of the thousands of lives lost every year due to firearms must be controlled. Even you would not demand a double blind, crossover-controlled trial to accept the fact that there is a compelling relationship between the number of guns and the number of shootings.

I would like to make one last suggestion, Dr. Stodd. Put five dollars in your pocket, get into your car, drive to the nearest Starbucks, order a triple cafe mocha latte espresso cappuccino and WAKE UP!

George L. Druger, MD

*Following is my reply to the open letter addressed to me by George L. Druger, M.D.*

To the editor:

Interesting and thoughtful comments from Dr. Druger. Unlike his apparent position in speaking for the "vast majority of Americans, including almost all responsible medical societies," I speak only for myself. Perhaps he has misinterpreted my remarks in the August 1999, Hawaii Medical Journal. A less emotional reading will reveal that at no time do I defend or condemn firearms in this country.

I am not a lover of guns. As a Korean War Marine Corps rifleman, I qualified as a sharpshooter with all small arms from the Navy .45 semi-automatic pistol to the BAR, but I retain no affection for guns. I have no firearms in my home, own no guns and harbor no sympathy for the NRA. However, irrespective of my or Dr. Druger's attitude, guns are part of American culture, and that is not likely to change.

The addition of further "gun control" legislation is based on the assumption that somehow these teenage shooting episodes can be eliminated with more laws related to the use of guns. I wish it could be so. Laws made no difference when the determined boys broke the lock on a gun case for their shooting rampage. Also, it was obvious that they were well schooled in how to use the guns, so the problem goes much deeper than licenses, examinations, permits, safeties and locked cabinets. Possibly, even Dr. Druger would agree. The Springfield, Oregon, and Columbine High School shootings, among other school teenage shooting events, stem from serious social problems. In every case, the parents had no idea what the children were doing or thinking, much less what might have generated their sick behavior.

The point of my paragraph in the August HMJ was to scold posturing politicians who seize upon a minuscule item like gun safeties as an attempted solution while ignoring the underlying societal ailment.

Russell T. Stodd, M.D. The Weathervane, HMJ